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management council newsletter

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FOR
CURRENT
SITUATION

.... events of interest to USDA managers

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

ISSUE #115 -- APRIL

NEW DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVES SYSTEM

On March 4, 1981, the new Departmental Directives System was approved by the Assistant Secretary for Administration. The new system will become effective on May 15, 1981. It is an integrated system which links all Departmental issuances through a comprehensive classification system. This classification system is functionally rather than organizationally based, so reorganizations will not have the adverse impact on the new system they have on the old. The classification system is also used as a basis for the distribution system so that users can elect to receive directives on subjects of most interest to them. A comprehensive index is also being developed which will enable users to identify all USDA regulations issued at the Departmental level. The new system will replace the following issuance systems:

1. Administrative Regulations
2. O&F Notices
3. OBPE Notices
4. Numbered and Unnumbered Secretary's Memoranda
5. Similar administrative issuances

Meetings have been held with all USDA agencies and staff offices to explain the new system. (Contact, Jane Benoit, O&F, 79270).

MORE ON THE
ASIAN/PACIFIC
AMERICAN HERITAGE WEEK

The Office of Equal Opportunity is coordinating the celebration of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week in USDA from May 9 through May 14.

Public assembly, film shows, and workshop on civil rights are among the activities planned for the period. Deputy Secretary Lyng will participate in this event. Congressman Norman Mineta, Representative of the 13th Congressional District of California, will be the keynote speaker on May 13. The newly organized USDA Folk Singers will make its debut at the public assembly.

All these activities are open to USDA employees. USDA will be represented at the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival that will take place on the Washington Monument Grounds on Saturday, May 9, 1981, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. (Contact, Samuel Wong, 382-1130).

NEW COURSE

APHIS has introduced a course in the basic techniques of management evaluation to train a pool of prospective Resource Management Evaluators.

Designed by Dr. Janet W. Berls of the Resource Management Systems and Evaluation Staff, the course stresses a client-oriented approach to evaluation. Participants are offered a practical guide for planning an evaluation that will produce reports more useful and credible to management. (Contact, Dr. Janet W. Berls, APHIS, 68104).

"AND JUSTICE FOR ALL"
POSTER

Several months ago, the FNS Civil Rights/EEO Division was informed by some of the Regional Offices that, in some areas, banks and post offices that are used as food stamp issuance agents have refused to display the USDA "And Justice For All" poster.

The poster is required by USDA civil rights regulations as a means of informing program participants of their equal opportunity rights and procedures for filing discrimination complaints. To resolve this conflict with civil rights requirements and yet retain the service of community banks for food stamp issuance, alternatives were sought. FNS proposed to OEO, who in turn granted approval that if the equal opportunity statement and complaint filing information was printed on the food stamp coupon book, notification objectives served by the poster would be achieved.

The following statement now appears on the cover of the coupon book:

This is an equal opportunity program. If you believe that you have been discriminated against by the Food Stamp Program because of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.

This approach to notification, over a period of time should prove to be a cost effective method of notifying our program beneficiaries. It provides an alternative to the requirement for the posting and periodic replenishment of posters in over 12,000 food stamp issuance offices. (Contact, Joseph Bennett, 76300)

FEDERAL WOMEN'S WEEK

The week of May 4-8, 1981, is designated as Federal Women's Week in USDA. There will be an opening ceremony on May 4 starting at 10:00 a.m., in the Jefferson Auditorium. There will be a variety of workshops, panels, seminars, exhibits and films presented throughout the week at various times and places. (Contact, Marjorie Hart, OEO, 382-1130)

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK OPPORTUNITY FAIR
MAY 10-14, 1981

The Presidential Proclamation #4829 dated March 23, 1981, proclaimed the week of May 10, 1981, as Small Business Week. The theme for this year is "1980's The Small Business Decade." The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) is sponsoring the Small Business Week Opportunity Fair on Thursday, May 14, starting at 10:00 a.m., in Room 218-A. The guest speaker will be Mr. R. F. McDermott, Deputy Associate Administrator for Procurement Assistance, Small Business Administration (SBA). From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., there will be a display of exhibits in the Patio. (Contact, Ray Gonzales, OSDBU, 77922)

QUARTERLY OSDBU COORDINATORS SEMINAR

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization will conduct its quarterly OSDBU Coordinators Seminar on May 19, 1981, in Room 2-W of the Administration Building, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Topics to be discussed include P.L. 96-481, and its impact on the 8(a) program; progress toward achievement of 1981 goals; problems in submission of AD 760 reports; and possible agency participation in seminars conducted by the National Urban League, NAACP, and National Women's Business Conference. (Contact, Melvin Moore, OSDBU, 77117)

APHIS TRAVELS BY PHONE

With travel budgets severely curtailed, Program and Management officials are looking at teleconferencing and its rapidly improving technology as an attractive alternative to mounting expensive time-consuming conferences around the country. APHIS has been experimenting with several audio-communications systems and has received positive feedback from the users. However, the need for sophistication and flexibility is becoming more apparent with each teleconference held. To meet these needs, APHIS plans to direct future resources towards an in-house teleconferencing facility which will eventually include audio, visual, graphic, and facsimile communications capabilities. (Contact, Murray Welsh, APHIS, 436-8010)

USDA-WIDE UNIFORM

The Department is proposing to consolidate the existing regulations from each USDA agency into a single set of codified USDA-wide regulations, standardizing Federal assistance policy and procedures in the Department for all grants and cooperative agreements. The regulations would implement Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-102 & A-110, and would specify the principles for determining allowable costs under USDA grants and cooperative agreements.

Additionally, these regulations would establish uniform audit requirements and policy for all USDA Federal assistance to State and local governments and Indian tribal governments. These regulations are also consistent with other major Federal assistance agency rules, such as the Department of Health and Human Resources. It is anticipated that publication of these regulations will reduce the inconsistencies and overlap of the separate agency-by-agency regulations and/or directives now in place within the Department and will reduce the complexity for program recipients that receive assistance from more than one agency of USDA. The likely outcome is that compliance with acceptable practices will improve with no increase, and perhaps a decrease in administrative costs, both at the Federal and recipient levels. (Contact, Peter Ben Ezra, 755-1194).

PLEASE SEND NEW ITEMS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE TO GINA SCIUTO, X-73291, ROOM 212-E.